PRESS RELEASE

CISLAC tasks Federal Government on Prompt Recovery of all Outstanding Revenues from the Extractive Sector and Implementation of NEITI Audit Recommendations

The Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre, CISLAC urges the Federal Government under the leadership of the president Muhammadu Buhari to recover all revenues due to the citizens of Nigeria and expedite the implementation of recommendations made but the independent Auditors in the Annual Reports of the Nigeria Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative, NEITI in the past 10 years.

We note again, as always, the reminder credited to the NEITI Secretariat that about $11.6 billion (N2.32 trillion), which represents outstanding total dividends arising from loans and interest repayments from Federal Government’s investment in Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), among others, is yet to be remitted into the nation’s coffers and therefore unavailable to finance development for the citizens of our ailing country.

CISLAC observes that this figure, if verified, is more than 50% of the total expenditure in the 2015 annual budget. It will also be about 10% more than the allocation for recurrent expenditure, 75% of the provision for capital allocation and about 65% of the fiscal deficit in the annual national budget for the 2015 fiscal year.

We reiterate that this state of affairs has resulted because of lack of political will in previous administrations to implement remedial action emanating from recommendations from previous NEITI audit reports which had been reinforced by the reports of several probe panels and Committees.

We recall that one of the President’s promises during the campaigns was to implement the recommendations from the NEITI reports and believe that the time to start is now. We are aware that lack of political will is what has long hindered the ability of the Inter-ministerial Task Team IMTT and the Board of the NEITI to implement these recommendations, block leakages and recover unremitted funds.

CISLAC calls on the Federal Government to empower and strengthen the IMTT to effectively carry out its mandate. It might also be necessary to review the NETI Act 2007 to strengthen sanction mechanisms which are presently weak and probably empower the NEITI Board or some other independent Body to enforce more stringent sanctions on erring stakeholders outside of the usually politicized and sluggish Office of the Attorney-General of the Federation.
CISLAC is aware of the ability and willingness of the NEITI to provide necessary information to assist the Federal Government in recovering these funds and therefore, there will be no need to invest precious time and resources in setting up of any more superfluous Panels to conduct any fresh probes, investigations.

We urge the Federal Government to expedite action on the recovery of all the monies due to the coffers of the Nigerian people and channel them into people oriented development as a way of ushering in the change that citizens voted for and in fulfillment of campaign promises to the teeming population of highly expectant Nigeria and demonstrate the commitment to address the cancer of corruption that has undermined our collective desire for development and good life for our citizens

Signed:

_Auwal Ibrahim Musa (Rafsanjani)_
_Executive Director, CISLAC_

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**CISLAC welcomes the Dissolution of the NNPC Board: It’s a Step in the Right Direction**

The Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre, CISLAC whole-heartedly welcomes the Federal Government’s Decision to dissolve the Board of the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation, NNPC. We are convinced that this is not only long overdue and very timely; it is also a step in the right direction

We note that no meaningful reforms of the oil and gas sector can take place with the same Board under which most of the breaches occurred. A Board under which such monumental frauds in fuel subsidy management, non remittance of monies due to the federation account, controversial crude for oil swaps and collapse or sabotage of our refineries occurred definitely does not deserve to remain. Indeed, the scandal that trailed the notorious forensic Audit by PriceWatersHouseCoopers can largely be traced to having conducted that expensive audit with this Board in place.

CISLAC places on record that the NNPC and its subsidiary, DPR remain today major brick walls in the implementation of the NEITI process in Nigeria, especially on matters of remediation and implementation of recommendation of the independent auditors such that about 10 years after, we have recorded very limited progress
We call on the president not to stop at the dissolution of the Board but to make this the beginning of sweeping reforms to restructure and overhaul not just the NNPC but the entire extractive resources and revenue managing architecture of the nation.

CISLAC recalls that the President in his promises to Nigerians during the electioneering campaigns was to rid the nation of corruption and we daresay, there is no better sector to start than the one that generates over 85% of our revenues and 95% of our foreign exchange earnings.

We note with disappointment the failure of the past government to pass the PIB into law in spite of repeated promises and enjoin the new administration to work to expedite action on ensuring that we gave a robust legal framework to regulate the sector.

CISLAC however is convinced that there are successes that can be recorded and milestones that can be achieved in instilling sanity, transparency and substantial degrees of accountability can be entrenched in the extractive sector, if the government musters the political will with or without a PIB in place and the dissolution is one of such.

Just as appointing Minister of Petroleum Resources in accordance with relevant provisions of NNPC Act to Chair a new Board of NNPC has become imperative, we strongly recommend that having the National Council of Ministers constitute the Board, to a large extent will facilitate transparency and accountability in the oil and gas sector. We urge President Muhammadu Buhari to disregard all suggestions to serve as the Minister of Petroleum Resources as such would amount to the breach of Section 138 of Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria, which prohibits President from holding other Executive Office during his tenure.

We therefore urge the Government to identify others and implement them without fear or favour while we continue to push for the passage of an enabling legislation. CISLAC is presently preparing to recommend concrete policy options of such Extra-PIB policy approach to the Federal Government. We call on all stakeholders and well meaning Nigerians in the academia, civil society and the media to come up with constructive recommendations that can achieve this aim while we do not relent to work for the passage of a people oriented and development propelling PIB.

Signed:

Auwal Ibrahim Musa (Rafsanjani)
Executive Director